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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 000886

SENSITIVE
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STATE FOR WHA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/02/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [CASC](#) [MARR](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: TFH01: MONSIGNOR JUAN JOSE PINEDA OPPOSES ZELAYA
BUT SEES SAN JOSE ACCORD AS BEST SOLUTION

Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens, reasons 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (C) Summary. The Ambassador met on September 2 with Monsignor Juan Jose Pineda, the Auxiliary Archbishop of Tegucigalpa, to discuss the political crisis and the current landscape for acceptance of the San Jose Accord. Although Pineda is politically opposed to President Manuel "Mel" Zelaya, he has concluded that the San Jose Accord, despite its imperfections, is the best solution to bring peace to Honduras. He expressed concern about Hondurans' reaction if the United States takes additional measures against the de facto regime. The Ambassador urged Pineda to encourage de facto regime members to be more open to negotiation. End summary.

¶2. (C) Pineda is the second-highest ranking Roman Catholic cleric in Honduras and one of the most respected figures in the country. Although he is politically opposed to President Zelaya, Pineda informed the Ambassador he has concluded that the best thing for the country would be for the de facto regime to accept the San Jose Accord. However, he noted his concern that the San Jose Accord does not include sufficient enforcement mechanisms to ensure that Zelaya would honor the agreement once restored. Specifically, Pineda was worried that 1) Zelaya would not comply with the agreement; 2) Zelaya would continue to compulsively lie to the public; and 3) Zelaya would allow Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez to bring troops to Honduras. The Ambassador noted that a well thought-out accord would protect Hondurans from these potential threats and that to date de facto President Micheletti has not proposed additional enforcement mechanisms to include in the San Jose Accord. The Ambassador reminded Pineda that Costa Rican President Oscar Arias was open to adding additional enforcement mechanisms to the Accord.

Pineda Can Help Bring Solution Now

¶3. (C) The Ambassador reiterated that the US believes both sides must come to an agreement now. If no agreement is reached, potential for civil disobedience and disorder in Honduras will rise. US patience with the political crisis in Honduras is wearing thin. The Ambassador asked Pineda to use his influence with the de facto regime to urge them to

negotiate to bring peace to Honduras and prevent further sanctions.

¶4. (C) The Ambassador suggested that de facto regime head Micheletti and his representatives be more proactive in proposing specific enforcement mechanisms to ensure that Zelaya would comply with the terms of the San Jose Accord. On September 3, Pineda plans to meet with Micheletti and the four members of his negotiating team: Arturo Corrales, Vilma Morales, Mauricio Villeda, and Carlos Lopez Contreras. Pineda agreed to tell Micheletti that he needs to do a better job negotiating and that his negotiating team should propose specific enforcement mechanisms to be added to the San Jose Accord.

Fear About US Determination of Coup

¶5. (C) Pineda expressed to the Ambassador his concern regarding rumors that the US plans to declare the events of June 28 as a military coup. Pineda said he feared that if it is determined there was a military coup, a civil war will break out. The Ambassador reiterated that the US has already determined that the events of June 28 are a coup, and that the current discussion was related to a determination on aid.

Follow-up plan

¶6. (C) Pineda promised to call the Ambassador following his

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meeting with Micheletti. Pineda also mentioned that he would like to meet with President Zelaya. The Ambassador said he would convey this message to President Zelaya when he saw him in Washington on September 4.

¶7. (C) Comment: Despite Pineda's strong personal opposition to President Zelaya, he has concluded that the San Jose Accord is the best solution for peace in Honduras, and has agreed to work toward conclusion of the accord. Given his influence and the respect he is accorded by Hondurans, Pineda can play a useful role in urging negotiation between the parties. Pineda may be in a better position as a negotiator than his Cardinal Oscar Andres Rodriguez given the latter's public support for the coup. End comment.

HENSHAW